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## MISCELLANEOUS.

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I.—*Account of the Mound at Grave Creek Flats in Virginia.*  
By MR. SCHOOLCRAFT. Transmitted by Sir J. E. ALEX-  
ANDER, in 1842.

THE Tumulus or Mound at Grave Creek Flats is situated on the east bank of the Ohio, twelve miles below the town of Wheeling, in Marshall county, Virginia. Its figure is a truncated cone, measuring 295 feet at the base, 60 at the top, and 70 feet in perpendicular height. Its height appears to have been originally greater, and its form more regular; but the influence of the weather has furrowed the outward surface and spread *débris* round its base; and the collapsing of the interior cavities has caused it to settle to one side, and the plane at its summit to form an acute angle with the horizon, instead of being parallel to it.

When this part of the western country was first visited, the mound was covered with the common growth of the forest. A white oak stood on the summit, which was four feet in diameter, and which, when it fell, was inferred, from the number of its cortical layers, to have been 700 or 800 years old.

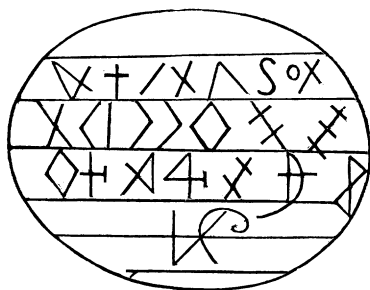
No excavation had been made in the mound when Mr. Schoolcraft, then an Indian agent, visited it for the first time, in the spring of 1818. It bore at that time a spare growth of forest-trees of moderate size. The banks of the Ohio in the vicinity are alluvial, resting on the carboniferous formation of Pittsburg: fragments of compact sandstone and grauwacke appear in the bed of Grave Creek; but no stone of any size, either rounded or angular, appeared on the sides of the mound.

Early in 1839 the proprietor of the land determined to excavate the mound. At the base a gallery was run horizontally to the centre of the structure; a shaft was sunk perpendicularly upon this from the summit; and the mound was penetrated at its mid height by another gallery.

The first seven feet above the level of the base were evidently a natural hillock, of which the builders had availed themselves. Immediately above this was a cavity, in which were found fragments of two human skeletons, in a state of great decay, the teeth only being perfect: the cavity was circular, and had been formed by placing posts close to each other, and covering them with flat stones. The stones generally resembled the loose shods (?) in the Grave Creek valley: a few were of a rock which occurs *in situ* on the west bank of the Ohio. Nothing of the wood re-

maintained but a black mould in the bottom of the cavity, and the impression of the outlines of the logs and of the surface of their bark distinctly left on the compact earth. When cleared out, the cavity measured 9 feet in height. From the height of the cavity and the position of the bones, it was conjectured that the bodies or skeletons had been placed in a standing position. Nothing was found in this cavity but the bones.

About 16 or 17 feet above the top of this cavity was a second, constructed in the same manner, and containing the remains of a single human skeleton. The cranium broke on raising it, and all the bones were further advanced in decomposition than those of the skeletons in the lower cavity. Here too the teeth were in perfect preservation; and a full set (32) were found. Along with these bones were discovered 1700 ivory beads; 500 small sea-shells of the volute class; 66 pieces of mica, each of which contained four perforations, apparently for the purpose of uniting them; "five copper bracelets or arm-bands, but without being soldered at the points of junction." None of these relics evinced any artistical talent or acquirements beyond what are possessed by existing Indian tribes. Along with them, however, was found a small elliptical stone table, with twenty-four distinct characters arranged in parallel lines engraven on it. An exact transcript of this stone, and the characters, the size of the original, is given in the accompanying drawing:—



The 22nd and 23rd characters, if we read from left to right, the 17th and 18th, if we read from right to left, says Mr. Schoolcraft, "are identical with the ideographic signs of the Algonic hieroglyphics of America, denoting *death from an arrow*."

With the exception of the seven feet of natural hillock, and the stones which had formed the roofs of the cavities, the mound consisted exclusively of "made earth."